



## Enter and View Report

### GP Access at Cockhedge Medical Centre Ltd

Visit: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Report published: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017

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# Background

## What is Healthwatch Warrington?

Healthwatch Warrington helps the residents and communities of Warrington to get the best out of local health and social care services. We gather the views of local people and make sure they are heard and listened to by the organisations that provide, fund and monitor these services.

## What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out *Enter and View* (E&V) visits. Local Healthwatch representatives, who are trained volunteers, carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act (2012) allows local Healthwatch representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. *Enter and View* visits can happen if people identify a problem but equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation. This enables lessons to be learned and good practice shared.

Healthwatch *Enter and View* visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. If safeguarding issues are raised during a visit Healthwatch Warrington has safeguarding policies in place which identify the correct procedure to be taken.

## Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to the findings observed on the specific dates set out below. This report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Warrington would like to thank the staff, in particular Stephanie Whitenburgh (Business Manager), for taking the time to show the visiting team round and answering their questions. We would also like to thank our trained volunteers for their contributions.

## Background and Purpose of the visits

Healthwatch Warrington made the decision to visit GP practices within the borough; with a focus on access and the general environment of surgeries. This is because access to primary care services (mainly GPs) has been identified as a recurrent theme within the public feedback data collected by Healthwatch Warrington.

GP access is often highlighted as a problematic aspect of patient experience, with common issues including; difficulties encountered when booking appointments, a lack of appointment availability and communication problems. However, public service reviews also hint at areas of good practice that could be highlighted and shared. Therefore, our authorised representatives visit GP practices in different clusters to gather feedback directly from patients and conduct specialist Enter & View visits.

Healthwatch Warrington engages with local Patient Participation Groups, GP practices and partner organisations to share our findings and help make improvements through recommendations.

## Details of the Visit

### Location

The visit took place at Cockhedge Medical Centre Ltd, Units 7-8, The Mall, Cockhedge Shopping Centre, Warrington, WA1 2QQ.

### Date/Time

The visit took place on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017, from 10:00am - 12:00pm.

### Authorised Representatives (Visiting Team)

Ildico Boden - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative

Paul Mendeika - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative

### GP Practice Staff

Stephanie Whitenburgh, Business Manager

### Description of the Surgery

Cockhedge Medical Centre Ltd belongs to the Central North cluster and is located within Cockhedge Shopping Centre.

At present, the surgery has approximately 3,050 registered patients. As well as general consultations, the surgery provides a range of additional clinics and services, including; childhood immunisations clinics, asthma reviews, diabetic reviews, travel immunisations, cervical Smears, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease reviews, contraceptive services, chronic kidney disease reviews, mental health reviews, coronary artery disease reviews, hypertension reviews, flu vaccinations (during the winter months), learning disability reviews, new patient checks, blood test, stroke and transient ischaemic reviews and a number of Non-NHS services.

In July 2015, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the surgery as overall 'good' (in all areas) in its inspection report.

## Results of the Visit

Wherever possible the reports below are in the words of the E&V team members who were present at the time of the visit. The reports have been collated by the Healthwatch Warrington team and some text has been formatted to allow for easy reading; however the essential facts of the visiting team's reports have not been altered.

### Observations from the Visit

#### External Access and Appearance

The practice is located in units 7 - 8 of the Mall at Cockhedge Shopping Centre, opposite Asda supermarket.

The car parking areas are disabled accessible; with 20 spaces for blue badge holders available near the building's main entrance.

The main entrance is clean, well-maintained and has automatic doors. There is a slight incline on the approach to the surgery, which makes it accessible for wheelchairs users or visitors with prams. Disabled visitors can also access the surgery via the back door, from a vehicle.

There are a variety of notices in the surgery's front windows, such as Age UK, Safeguarding, NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group, Slavery, Cheshire Sexual Assault Services, Footsteps and information about renewing your prescription. The external access premises were clean and kept in good-condition, throughout.

## Reception Area

The reception area was accessible and operated by two members of staff. Near reception, there was an electronic check-in system in place, which displays information in various languages such as Polish and Spanish. There is a disabled toilet opposite the reception desk.

A rolling electronic display screen was also in situation, which showed patient information such as health promotions, bowel cancer awareness, alcohol and sepsis information and advertised the hospital shuttle service. This system incorporated a patient call announcement on screen, with an audible notification sounded to let patients know that it is their turn to be seen and which colour coded room to visit; making it easier for them to find the correct room.

Plenty of noticeboards were found in the reception area; with information clearly displayed that related to support and signposting information for a range of patients. These noticed covered specific conditions; for example carers, care and treatment of diabetes. In addition, there was an excellent display of leaflets in the waiting area, relating for instance to public health support, help for bereavement and infection control. Music was playing and the atmosphere felt very relaxed.

## Waiting Room / Seating Area

Varied types of seating were available in the waiting area, with a few extra seats provided along the slope near the entrance. The whole area was carpeted, with room for buggies, wheelchairs and other appliances/aids. However, due to space restrictions, the reception area has now reached its capacity.

## Additional Facilities

In addition to disabled parking and toilets, the practice provides a range of facilities for patients with additional access needs. For example, a Google translation application is used for access to British Sign Language and Language Line for interpretation and translation services.

## **Dementia Friendly Approach**

The surgery's coloured coded doors are a good asset for people with dementia and also make it easier for everyone to find the correct room. The practice has clear signage and a relatively small waiting area.

## **Navigation Around the Building**

As above, there is good, clear signage throughout the building and the colour coded doors make navigation easier. Access was good throughout the building.

## **Cleanliness and Maintenance of Communal Areas**

Good levels of cleanliness, tidiness and maintenance were observed throughout the practice.

## **Patient Voice and Feedback**

The surgery has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG), which currently has 9 members. The visiting team spoke with a representative from the group and they said that they had no complaints and that the practice is excellent. The PPG member also commented that other members of the group also shared this opinion. The PPG has a quarterly meeting with practice staff. The Practice Manager wants to develop the PPG further to facilitate greater patient participation and proactive patient engagement activities.

The surgery already has a suggestion box available for patients, located in the waiting area. On the surgery's website, patients can access a comprehensive information leaflet that outlines also the practice's complaints procedures.

Furthermore, a patient that the visiting team spoke with commented that they had experienced a very big problem at another surgery, but here they had a good experience.

## Safety

The visiting team did not see any potential health hazards and the practice's fire exit signs were clearly marked. Relevant Health and Safety notices were also displayed.

### Staffing, Leadership and Promoting Positive & Respectful Attitudes

At present, the surgery has 1 GP, with a visiting GP spending 3 hours a week at the practice, a Practice Manager, an Office Manager, a Senior Receptionist (full time) and 2 part time Receptionists. The surgery also has a Nurse Practitioner, responsible for bloods, chronic reviews, prescribing, temperatures and vaccinations of sick children, in addition to a visiting midwife (Wednesday afternoons).

Furthermore, from April 2017, a Clinical Pharmacist will be available in the surgery for 4.5 hours per week, with the potential to develop this capacity further.

A Health Care Assistant also visits for two mornings per week, conducting new patient checks, blood pressure checks and medicine management sessions. A Health Visitor from Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust comes in and a Macmillan nurse visits every quarter to meet with patients.

The surgery has a staff room with a place for eating, heating up food and making hot drinks. There is also a staff toilet. The premises, including all staff areas seen, were well maintained and the members of staff that the visiting team spoke with appeared to be energetic and motivated; saying that they enjoy working at the practice and are happy.

The Practice Manager told the visiting the team that the surgery's staff do not limit their activities to just one type of task and they all learn as much as possible; enabling them to better work as a team. The surgery's management are also investigating and make full use (where practicable and affordable) of new technology, such as Skype, alongside different ways of working more efficiently and affording improved access to services.

## Appointments

The surgery advertises its opening hours and admissions policies, both on-site and on its website. The surgery's opening times are Monday 8:00am - 18:30pm, Tuesday 7:30am - 18:30pm, Wednesday 7:30am - 18:30pm, Thursday 7:30am - 18:30pm and Friday 8:00am - 18:30pm. The surgery is closed on the last Thursday of each month, for staff training. The surgery also offers extended hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (with early appointments commencing at 7:30am). The Practice Manager commented that if patients are waiting outside before that time, the surgery will let them inside to sit down and wait. The surgery does not offer weekend appointments, as a patient survey undertaken revealed little or no demand for weekend appointments.

After 8:00am appointments are open to access for patients. Repeat prescriptions can be requested on-line and Appointments are also available to book on-line. The surgery does not offer pre-bookable appointments, except for those with the Nurse Practitioner.

## Patient Survey Responses

The visiting team received a total of 5 survey responses from patients at the practice, with the survey questions focusing on their access experiences.

When asked about the appointment booking methods available at the surgery, all respondents were aware of phone access and 1 was aware that they could book in-person by visiting reception. However, none of the respondents mentioned that online booking facility, suggesting that greater awareness of this method could be promoted.

Patients were also asked, on average, how long it took them to reach reception when booking appointments by phone. 3 out of 5 respondents stated that it took less than 5 minutes to get through and the remaining 2 said that it took between 5-10 minutes; suggesting that phone line capacity is not a problematic issue at the practice.

Furthermore, patients were asked how often they could get an appointment at the date and time that suits them. Out of the 4 patients that responded to this question, 3 said they could ‘always’ or ‘often’ get a suitable appointment, with 1 stating they could ‘sometimes’. Similarly, all 4 respondents to this questions also said they could ‘often’ or ‘always’ get an appointment with the named GP of their choice. This suggests appointment availability and staff capacity do not cause significant issues at the surgery.

The visiting team also spoke with one patient who commented that they had seen the nurse instead of a doctor and the nurse was able to give them appropriate treatment. Furthermore, 1 patient stated they had additional access needs (translation services) and confirmed that the surgery successfully meets this requirement. When asked for further comments and suggestions, respondents spoke highly of the surgery; “This surgery is really perfect for me and all staff including receptionists are really good”; and “Quite happy with the surgery as it is”. However, one patient did ask that the surgery should: “Oil the automatic doors (they are very loud)”. As such, when asked how satisfied they were, overall, with the surgery’s appointment system, 4 out of 5 patients stated they were ‘very satisfied’ and 1 said they were satisfied.

## Summary

The visiting team felt this was an excellent, patient-centred practice that enjoys high patient and staff satisfaction levels. The patient feedback that the team received was extremely positive regarding accessibility, communication and quality of service. The staff that the visiting team met with were very friendly (including the GP), and the impression formed was that of a team working together to deliver their best for every one of their patients. New patients are still being accepted.

## Recommendations

1. *Continue to Develop the PPG and Strengthen the Patient Voice:* The Practice Manager should continue to work toward boosting the PPGs patient

engagement activities and contact Healthwatch Warrington to discuss opportunities to boost patient feedback levels.

2. **Share Good Practice:** It is encouraging to see that the practice is embracing new technology and it would be beneficial if the practice shares its findings with other surgeries in Warrington, if the use of these innovations is successful.
3. **Automatic Door:** The surgery should inspect the automatic doors, as they may require maintenance (due to patient feedback about a loud noise).

## Distribution List

*This report has been distributed to the following:*

- *Warrington Borough Council*
- *Warrington CCG*
- *Care Quality Commission*
- *Healthwatch England*

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### *Response from Provider*

##### **Cockhedge Medical Centre**

We are delighted with the overall findings by the visiting team. With reference to the recommendations, the practice will:

- Inspect the automatic doors
- Continue to promote online appointment access, in addition to embracing new technology
- Make every effort to further develop our PPG and liaise with Healthwatch to boost patient feedback levels.

Kind regards

Stephanie Whitenburgh

Practice Manager

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The Gateway, 85-101 Sankey Street, Warrington WA1 1SR

